



Zoning Code Update

Executive Summary

Public Review Draft, November 13, 2013

What is the Zoning Code Update?

This document provides an executive summary of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Zoning Code Update (ZCU). Included is an overview of the purpose and objectives of the project, a summary of issues with the existing Code, a description of the update process, and information about some of the new Code's key features and changes.

The current Zoning Code was originally adopted in 1984 and has undergone a number of amendments since adoption. The Zoning Code establishes where residential, commercial, and other land uses may be located within Town, what type of permit is required for each use, and what standards apply to new uses and development.

The ZCU was initiated by the Town Council to incorporate the goals and policies of the 2007 General Plan into the Code, modernize the Town's zoning regulations, and create a more user-friendly Code that supports the Community Vision expressed in the General Plan. The new Code includes regulations that promote sustainability, development quality and design, and encourage feet-first mobility.

Objectives of the Zoning Code Update

Implement the General Plan. Encourage the land use goals, policies, and actions designated by the General Plan to create a comprehensive and stable use pattern upon which to plan transportation, water supply, and other public facilities and utilities.

Promote Sustainability. Incorporate standards that promote sustainable development and incorporate the goals, policies, and actions outlined in the General Plan.

Promote Quality and Design. Incorporate standards that improve development quality and design, enhance visual character, avoid conflicts between land uses, and preserve the scenic qualities of the town by maintaining adequate open space.

Improve Readability and Usability. Use charts, graphics, and illustrations to make the Code easier to read and to reorganize the material to group similar and related regulations together.

Zoning Code Update Process

The updated Zoning Code has been developed over the last three years following significant research of the best-practices and progressive design standards of comparable communities, gathering community and stakeholder input, and evaluating regulations and methods of permit process improvements to encourage high-quality development and streamline review.

Listening Sessions

In the Fall of 2010, Community and Economic Development Department staff held a series of “Listening Sessions” with a number of local service organizations and interested parties to introduce the Zoning Code Update project and gather preliminary feedback from the community. Staff met with the following groups:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Lions Club
- Noon and Sunrise Rotaries
- Contractors Association
- Board of Realtors
- Village Association
- Lodging Association
- Advocates for Mammoth

Comparison Codes

The Town selected six zoning codes from different California cities/towns to use as comparisons: City of Sonoma, City of Culver City, City of Chico, Placer County, City of Grass Valley, and Town of Truckee. Staff reviewed these codes and compared them to the Town’s existing Zoning Code in order to identify potential changes and improvements that could be made.

Stakeholder Groups

Zoning Code Committee

The Zoning Code Committee (ZCC) consisted of two appointed members of the Planning and Economic Development Commission. The ZCC performed detailed review of each Code section in cooperation with staff.

Zoning Code Users Group

The Zoning Code User’s Group (ZCUC) was formed in 2009 and included individuals from the development community, local architects, members of the public, and the ZCC. The purpose of the group was to collect input from frequent users of the Zoning Code to identify issues and solutions to improve the Code.

Downtown Working Group

The Downtown Working Group (DWG) was formed in 2012 and consisted of members of the ZCUC, ZCC, a Town Council member, and additional stakeholders. The DWG was formed to provide specific feedback on the Commercial Zoning Districts Chapter of the Zoning Code and to serve as the focus group for the Town’s Main Street Planning Project.

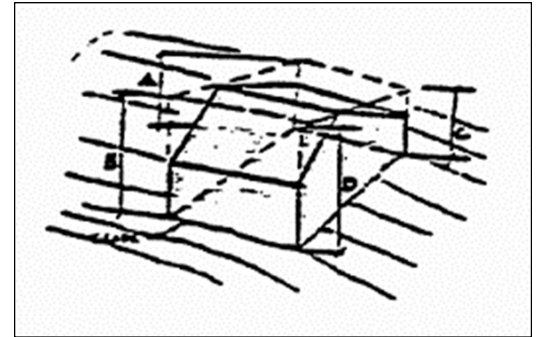
Planning and Economic Development Commission

The Planning and Economic Development Commission (PEDC) played a major role throughout the Code update. The PEDC assisted staff in identifying issues with the existing Code and providing detailed review of each new draft Code section and chapter as they were developed.

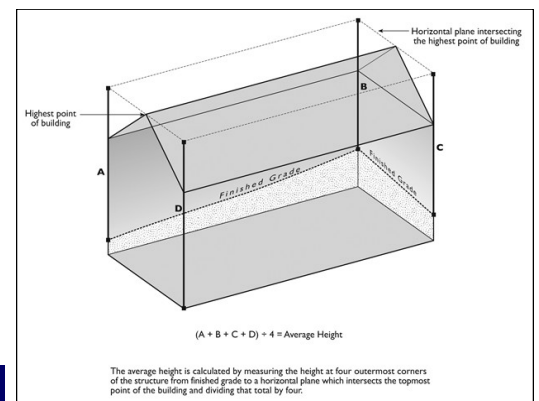
Issues with the Existing Code

The following are a handful of issues with the existing Zoning Code that were identified during the initial stages of the update process:

- 2007 General Plan policies are not adequately reflected in or are inconsistent with the existing Zoning Code;
- Existing Code does not reflect current State law;
- Internal inconsistency, particularly as sections of the Code have been updated, amended, and added over the years;
- Graphics are confusing and aren't used effectively;
- Lack of “user friendliness;”
- Existing Code does not reflect progressive planning practices such as form-based development standards or mobility standards;
- Development standards and regulations are not clearly defined enough to be reliable; and
- Development standards do not result in the types of development that are desired or reflect the character objectives of the community.



Example graphic from existing Code.



Updated graphic in new Code.

Key Changes and Improvements

The standards in the Zoning Code cover a wide range of topics, from limitations on building heights to regulations for signs throughout the town. Many of the Zoning Code sections remain similar to the existing Code, particularly with respect to the administrative regulations. However, a number of key changes were made in order to bring the Code up-to-date.

What's new in the Code

- Improved organization of the Code by creating a chapter with standards that apply to all land uses, as well as a chapter dedicated to describing regulations for specific land uses, rather than these regulations being repeated throughout the Code in different locations.
- Water-efficient landscaping regulations required by the State. These new regulations are intended to reduce landscaping water-use, which accounts for over 20 million gallons of water use each week during the summer.
- New parking standards in the Commercial Zones to reduce the amount of parking required by each individual business, improve opportunities for shared parking, and improve parking aesthetics by requiring new development to construct parking to the rear or side of buildings.
- New signage regulations that are intended to reduce visual clutter and enhance the resort character of Mammoth Lakes.
- Developed new regulations and standards to reflect new types of uses desired by the community, such as food-truck operations and the keeping and raising of chickens.

Key Changes and Improvements

Commercial Zoning Districts Chapter

The Town's zoning and property development standards play a key role in shaping the look and feel of private property, as well as the public realm. These standards are especially important in the Town's Commercial Zones, which primarily consist of the Main Street and Old Mammoth Road corridors.

A number of changes have been proposed for the Commercial Zones to encourage development that promotes the Community Vision and attracts high-quality development.

Objectives of Commercial Zoning changes

- Promote pedestrian-oriented development
- Encourage high-quality building design
- Support economic growth and sustainability
- Increase activity and animation
- Create public gathering spaces
- Maintain views and minimize shading from buildings
- Reduce the role of cars
- Streamline permitting for desired uses



Existing conditions on Main Street (top) include a hodge-podge of development types, limited pedestrian infrastructure, buildings obstructed by snow and large surface parking lots.

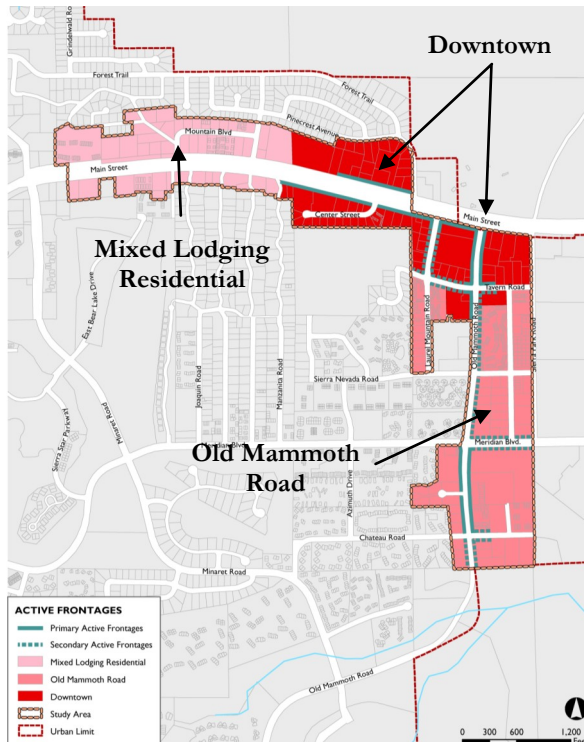
*The Zoning Code Update, in conjunction with the **Town's Main Street Plan** (in progress), seeks to transform Main Street into an active, inviting, and economically sustainable community destination.*



Urban Advantage

Key Changes and Improvements

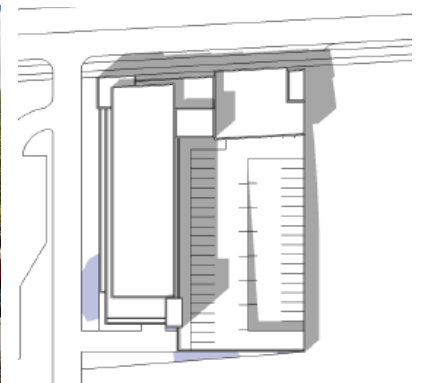
Commercial Zoning Districts Chapter



Building placement standards regulate the location of development on individual parcels, including the building's relationship to the street and adjacent parcels. The updated Code removes regulations that required buildings to be set back a minimum distance from the street. If on a Designated Active Frontage, a minimum percentage of the building must be built up to the sidewalk.



Façade and roof articulation standards limit long, tall buildings and discourage flat roofs. Top floor **stepbacks** are required in certain locations so that the building appears smaller at the pedestrian level.



Larger-scale development projects will be required to provide usable public open space to encourage pedestrian activity and small-scale events. A **parking setback** is included in the Code to reduce the visual impact of parked cars and discourage parking lots located between the street and buildings.

Zoning Districts

The two existing Commercial Zones (Commercial Lodging and Commercial General) have been divided into three Commercial Districts: Downtown, Mixed Lodging Residential, and Old Mammoth Road, to further refine the desired types of development in these areas.

Designated Active Frontages

Primary and secondary active frontages have been established on portions of the Main Street and Old Mammoth Road corridors that are intended to be especially active and pedestrian-oriented. Such streets are subject to additional standards that promote active ground-floor uses and require buildings to be located at the sidewalk edge.

Please give us your comments!

**Review the Draft Zoning Code on our website and
submit a comment:**

www.ci.mammoth-lakes.ca.us

Please attend one of our Public Open Houses:

Tuesday, December 10th, 4:00 to 6:00 pm

Wednesday, December 11th, 9:00 to 11:00 am

Thursday, December 12th, 4:00 to 6:00 pm

**All held in Suite Z, 437 Old Mammoth Road,
above Vons in Minaret Village Mall**

Comments due by January 6, 2014

The Zoning Code Update was funded by a generous grant (\$318,245) from the Strategic Growth Council (under the Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resources Protection). The Strategic Growth Council distributes grants through the Sustainable Communities program (funded by Proposition 84) to promote planning for community sustainability.



For Additional Information, Contact:

Sandra Moberly
Acting Community and Economic Development Director
Town of Mammoth Lakes
PO Box 1609
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(760) 934-8989 ext. 251
smoberly@ci.mammoth-lakes.ca.us
www.ci.mammoth-lakes.ca.us